



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Office of the Commissioner

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Appropriations Committee

March 25, 2022

SB 402: An Act Concerning Funding to Test for PFAS in Shellfish

Commissioner Bryan P. Hurlburt – Department of Agriculture

and

Commissioner Katie Dykes – Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France, and honorable members of the Appropriations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 402: AN Act Concerning Funding to Test for PFAS in Shellfish on behalf of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

SB 402 would allocate funding to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to test for PFAS in Shellfish. Following conversations with Environmental Analysts at both DEEP and DoAG, we would like to suggest that this responsibility would best fit under the Department of Agriculture instead.

The Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Aquaculture (DA/BA) is the lead agency in charge of shellfish sanitation in the state and operates as part of the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP). The responsibilities of the Bureau of Aquaculture include:

- **Shoreline Sanitation Surveys** to perform coastal sanitary surveys along Connecticut's 250-mile shoreline. The Sanitary survey identifies all actual and potential pollution sources and their impact upon a growing area; reviews bacteriological quality of waters in the growing area; analyzes meteorological, hydrodynamic, and geographical characteristics of the growing area; and evaluates changes in land use and their potential to impact the growing area.
- **Classifying shellfish growing waters.** Shellfish growing areas are classified based upon the findings of shoreline sanitary surveys. Routine water quality results should support the classifications. Bureau of aquaculture staff collects, and DoAg's onsite laboratory processes, water and shellfish samples year-round. A list of shellfish growing areas and water quality stations along Connecticut's shoreline can be viewed on our [aquaculture mapping atlas](#).
- **Shellfish Safety.** DA/BA is responsible for ensuring that all harvested Connecticut shellfish are safe for consumption. Our laboratory maintains methods for assessing viral contamination, the bacteria *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* and harmful algae bloom organisms. The DA/BA maintains procedures to close shellfish growing areas and recall harvested shellfish in the event of an emerging public health issue, as well as to investigate potential shellfish-borne illnesses.
- **Licensing Shellfish and Aquaculture Operations-** the DA/BA licenses all commercial shellfish operations, which may include market harvesting, reshipping, shucking, and repacking of shucked shellfish; relaying/transplanting operations; and commercial seed oyster harvesting. DA/BA also licenses municipal recreational relays and scientific studies.



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- **Collaborative Work:** the DA/BA continues to partner with CT Sea Grant and the local shellfish commissions on communications, best practices, and grants which support Connecticut's shellfish industry, such as the [2021 preliminary report on pandemic impacts on CT Aquaculture](#).

If the intent of this bill is to test for perfluoroalkyl (PFAS) in mollusks or bivalves, such as oysters, clams, mussels, and/or scallops, then it is the opinion of both agencies that this would fall under the purview of DoAg's Bureau of Aquaculture.

At present, the cost of performing this additional testing is not allocated in the Governor's proposed budget, and should this legislation move forward, the department would require additional funding. We would request clarification on the agency of cognizance, and parameters related to testing, which would determine the expansiveness to which the agency would require funding.

Thank you for allowing me to provide comments on this bill, I look forward to working with the committee to answer any questions. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Kayleigh Royston at Kayleigh.Royston@ct.gov.